





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2023

https://archive.org/details/250thanniversary00demi_0

GEN

ST. ANNE'S
CHURCH

✓

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1833 01231 2572

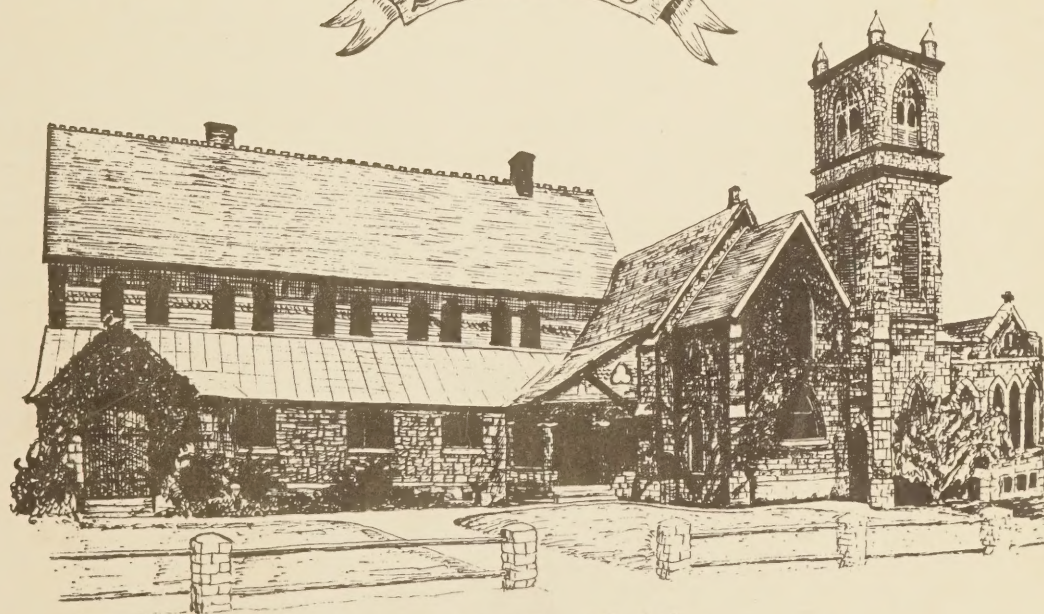
GENEALOGY
974.702
AM8D

250th ANNIVERSARY

ST. ANN'S CHURCH

1712 - 1962

AMSTERDAM, NEW YORK



-1712-1962-

BY THE REV. GEORGE E. DE MILLE
CANON OF ALBANY



CHAPTER I

QUEEN ANNE'S CHAPEL

Although the present parish of St. Ann's, Amsterdam, was not incorporated until the Nineteenth Century was well on its way, its roots go back more than a century before that incorporation. They reach back to a time when Schenectady was a tiny village perched precariously on the very edge of white civilization, when the Mohawk River west of that village ran through primeval forest, unbroken except for the little farming villages of the Mohawk Indians. At the time when our story opens, the easternmost of such villages, their principal "castle", was located just where the Schoharie Creek empties into the Mohawk River. This location now bears the name which it has born since the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, Fort Hunter.

About three miles west of Fort Hunter lies Auriesville. Here the Roman Catholic Church has erected a shrine, a notable center of pilgrimage, in memory of the heroic priests who, in the middle of the Seventeenth Century, lost their lives in the endeavor to convert the Mohawks to the Christian Faith. These priests were without question deserving of inclusion in the ranks of the noble army of martyrs. But it must be remembered that the savages who tortured and killed them were not actuated by any hatred of Christianity as such. Father Jogues and his successors were hated by the Iroquois, and were killed by them, not because they were Christians or priests or missionaries, but because they were Frenchmen. The sequel shows clearly how true this is.

The story of St. Ann's begins in the year 1702. In that year Lord Cornbury, royal governor of the province of New York, held at Albany a conference with the sachems of the Mohawk nation. Five of these sachems, in all probability the sons of the men who had martyred the French priests, showed how little they were anti-Christian. They begged the governor to forward to Queen Anne their petition, that the queen would "be a good mother, and send them someone to teach them religion".

This petition was sent to just the right person, and at just the right time. Queen Anne was a devout churchwoman, who could hardly fail to heed this Macedonian cry. And she had at hand an instrument to carry out her wishes. Only the year before the Rev. Thomas Bray, who had served as the commissary of the Bishop of London in Maryland, and had there learned at first hand the pressing importance of missionary work in the New World, had founded the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts---the mother of all Anglican missionary enterprise.

Both Queen and Society took speedy action. In October, 1703, two missionaries were dispatched from England to work among the Mohawks. One only, the Rev. Throughgood More, arrived in Albany in the fall of 1704. For a little over a year he worked there. But he was attempting to deal with the Indian only as he came to Albany to trade; therefore he saw the Indian only at his drunken worst, and he soon gave up in despair. In

1708 a priest of greater vision arrived in Albany. This was the Rev. Thomas Barclay. Although he lived in Albany, and his primary work was there, he visited the Indians in their eastern castle, and by 1711 he had made a few converts.*

In 1710 occurred the famous visit of the four Mohawk sachems to England. Out of this visit came results. A select committee of the S.P.G. met at Lambeth Palace, and there agreed upon a new policy for the projected mission. Two missionaries, single men if possible, were to be sent to live at the Mohawk castle, each with a guaranteed yearly salary of fifty pounds. A chapel and a rectory were to be built; parts of the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible were to be translated into the Mohawk tongue; intoxicating liquors, the curse of any attempt to better the Indian, were to be prohibited within the confines of the mission; and it was even hoped that an Anglican bishop might be sent out.

In accordance with this new and realistic policy, by August, 1712, the chapel had been erected, the contractors being five Schenectady Dutchmen. It was a limestone building, twenty-four feet square, with a belfry. The cost of the building was borne by the queen, who also sent over for its furnishings, altar cloths, cushions, a surplice, prayer books, and a silver communion set. The interior is thus conjecturally described by Max Reid:

"The entrance to the Chapel was on the north side. The pulpit stood at the west end and was provided with a sounding board. There was also a reading desk. Directly opposite the pulpit were two pews with elevated floors, one of which in later times was Sir William Johnson's; the other for the minister's family. The rest of the congregation had movable benches for seats."

As soon as the chapel was finished, a rectory, likewise of stone, was begun, and finished in the following year. They built well, those Dutchmen from Schenectady; their construction still stands, the second oldest inhabited house of the Mohawk Valley.

The first service in the new chapel was held by the Rev. Thomas Barclay, who thus ended his missionary labors among the Mohawks. The date was October 25, 1712; the text was "My house shall be called of all nations the house of Prayer." Both this service and this text are of great significance. We are apt to forget that from the time of the Reformation, for nearly two hundred years the only Christian Church which made any attempt to convert non-Christians was the Church of Rome. Indeed, the Lutheran theologians had erected this abstinence into a principle, maintaining that our Lord's commission, "Go ye into all the world," had been addressed to the original disciples only, and applied to no one else. This service at Fort Hunter, and its sermon text, mark the beginning of that process whereby the Church of England---a church in England and for Englishmen only---became transformed into the world-wide Anglican Communion.

*It has been asserted, both by Dr. Carroll and Mr. Reid, the older historian of the parish, that the Rev. John Talbot was the first of the Mohawk missionaries. But there is no evidence that Talbot, who was one of the great priests of the colonial church, ever came west of the Berkshires.

Meanwhile the Rev. William Andrews, appointed by the Society as the first Anglican priest to live among the Mohawks, was on his way. On November 15, 1712, he held his first service in the new chapel, and speedily moved into his rectory. It is fascinating to try to picture him, vested in flowing, ankle-length surplice, conducting Morning Prayer from the reading pew in his little square chapel, and mounting to the pulpit to address his dark-skinned congregation, baptizing their babies, administering their quarterly Communion. The Mohawks were receptive, and the work progressed steadily. Between his arrival in November, 1712, and the following September, he had baptized forty-five Indians. In 1714 he was furnished with an essential tool when the Book of Common Prayer in Mohawk was issued by a New York printer. Assisted by a Mr. Oliver, whom the Society had sent out and paid to act as schoolmaster, he had begun a school. In 1715 he was able to report that one hundred Indians were regular attendants at service. From this point on, in spite of many obstacles and occasional set-backs, Anglican work among the Mohawks was a continuing and in the main a successful operation.

However, it proved too much for the endurance of the minister. In 1719 Andrews, discouraged by the conditions of life among the Mohawks, and above all by their recurrent bouts of drunkenness, left for the more ordered life of a white parish. For a time after his departure, work at Fort Hunter lapsed. But in 1728 the Rev. John Miln was appointed to St. Peter's, Albany, and in 1729 he reported to the S.P.G. that "the Indians seem very well disposed to receive the blessed Gospel among them. Every time I go there they meet me with acclamations of joy." It was his practice to visit the chapel four times yearly, staying several days, baptizing their children, celebrating the Holy Communion, and preaching through an interpreter. At Easter, 1731, fifteen Mohawks made their communions, and twelve children and two adults were baptized.

But Miln was followed by a man far more fitted for the work. The Rev. Thomas Barclay had a son, Henry. Moore and Andrews and Miln are little more than names, but Henry Barclay stands out in the pages of history as a real person. He was born in Albany in 1715, and educated at Yale College--at this time a prolific producer of candidates for the Anglican priesthood. He had seen his father at work among the Mohawks, and he found there his vocation. In 1735 he went to live at Fort Hunter as resident catechist---the first man to live in the rectory since the departure of Andrews. He was plainly a man with a tremendously strong call to work in the mission field. Governor Colden thus bears testimony to his effectiveness. "...A young gentleman out of pious zeal went voluntarily among the Mohawks. He learned...how to pronounce the words which had been made for the last missionary's use. He set up a school to teach their children to read and write their own language...I happened to be in the Mohawk country and saw several of their performances where they went through some part of the Common Prayer with great decency. I was likewise present several times at their private devotions, which some of them performed duly morning and evening. I had many opportunities of observing the great regard they had for this young man; so far that the fear of his leaving them made the greatest restraint on them."

Shortly after his arrival Barclay was able to report back to England that only three or four of the adult Indians living at Fort Hunter were unbaptized. This meant that in spite of gaps and set-backs, the nation of warriors, the terror of the French, were in the main a nation of Episcopalians.

After two years of residence, Barclay went to England, where he was duly ordained priest. On his return in 1738 he was appointed to St. Peter's Church, Albany, where he had a white congregation and a living in reasonably civilized surroundings. But he did not forget. He spent the first five weeks after his return in Albany; the next five weeks he was again at Fort Hunter, and as long as he remained at St. Peter's he regularly visited his Indian cure. Here he was assisted by the Rev. J. J. Oel, a former Lutheran who had been ordained priest in England, and by two school masters. Furthermore, he had trained several Indians to act as catechists--a move toward a native ministry that was two hundred years in advance of his time.

As a token of their affection, the Mohawks presented Barclay with the deed of a farm at Fort Hunter---the glebe which will recur several times in our story. In 1746 Barclay was promoted to the rectorate of Trinity Church, New York. But still, as we shall see, he was mindful of his Mohawk children.

But now a still more important figure in the history of Anglicanism in colonial New York appears on the scene. In 1738 Sir Peter Warren, a British admiral who had acquired a vast estate along the Mohawk west of Schenectady sent as resident manager his young nephew. The nephew's name was William Johnson.

No one questions Johnson's size among the men of mark in colonial New York, but his character has received widely varying estimates. The reason for this is not hard to see. Although Johnson died before the outbreak of the revolution, he had been a servant of the king, and his family and followers all took the Tory side. And his active Anglicanism made him an object of suspicion to the New England historians. True, he was no anemic saint, but a full-blooded man living on a crude frontier; he swore vigorously; he drank plenty of rum; his relations with the women were not exactly conventional, though he was not the promiscuous squaw-chaser legend had made him out to be. Molly Brant would not have lived for nineteen years with a man who was unfaithful to her. Now these are common sins; and an enlightened moral theology will certainly hold that they are more than balanced by Johnson's uncommon virtues. Unquestionably he had a greater influence than any white man before or since over the American Indian; and this influence was the Indian tribute to sheer character. He was an honest trader among a legion of cheats. His word was always good. He had a sincere regard for the welfare of the Indian in an age when the Indian was regarded by many as a wild beast to be exterminated without pity. And in an age of rampant individualism and selfishness he was deeply committed to the public interest. But the important facet of his character for our purposes was his religion. This has been represented as nothing but a phase of his politics. However, it is difficult after reading his letters, with their thousands of references to the Anglican Church, their evidence of his constant endeavor to advance that church, his painstaking care to secure able coadjutors in his missionary strategy, to avoid the conclusion that Johnson was a sincerely religious man and a deeply committed Anglican. Three great parishes of the present Diocese of Albany--St. George's, Schenectady, St. John's, Johnstown, and St. Ann's--owe much of their present strength to the care they received from Johnson when they were sickly infants.

Second only to Johnson in his power over the Mohawks and his zeal for Anglicanism was a full-blooded Mohawk who has been called "the most extraordinary man his race produced since the advent of the white man on this continent." This man was Thayendanegea, better known as Joseph Brant. Brant has been represented in one modern novel as the typical "noble savage", the unspoiled son of the primeval forest. This is not history, but neo-pagan propaganda. Brant was educated at Dr. Wheelock's School, the parent of the present Dartmouth College. He was a communicant of the Anglican Church, a lay reader, who made a second translation of the Book of Common Prayer into Mohawk. In 1786 he visited England, where he was received, not as a curiosity out of the forest, but as the educated gentleman he was. The purpose of this visit was to raise funds to build the first Episcopal Church in Upper Canada.

We have seen that in 1746 the Rev. Henry Barclay, who had done the most successful work of any clergyman in the Mohawk mission, had gone to the rectorate of Trinity Church, New York. In 1748 he recommended as his successor in his former work the Rev. John Ogilvie, whom he taught something of the Mohawk language. It must be admitted that Moore and Andrews are little more than names in a list. But Ogilvie, like Barclay, emerges as a real person. "He was tall and graceful; and a dignity in his aspect which commanded respect, whilst his affability gained the affection of those he conversed with. He had an excellent voice; his elocution was free and easy, his imagination lively, his memory retentive, and his judgment solid. With such qualifications he could not fail of being a popular, admired preacher." It will be obvious that these were also just qualities to catch the fancy of the oratory-loving Indian. Fortunately for posterity, Ogilvie kept a diary during his tenure of Albany and Fort Hunter, and from it we can gain a fairly clear notion of his methods of work. It makes clear that although he was a man with a family, it was his custom several times a year to leave his family in Albany, and spend from three weeks to a month in the Fort Hunter rectory. Here are a few extracts from his diary:

Sunday, August 12, 1753

"Preached at the Mohawks, and gave notice for the Holy Communion.

Sunday, August 26, 1753

I administered the Holy Communion to Eighteen Persons, ten of them were Indians.

Sunday, Feb. 17th, 1754

I this Day officiated as usual in Low Dutch & English. Likewise in Indian & by the Help of the Interpreter explained the nature of the Lord's Supper; for the Celebration of that Holy Ordinance, I gave notice this morning.

I baptized this day one white and four Indian children.

Margaret the Widow of Luykas, this Day, made an humble Confession in Publick, for the neinous sin of Adultery, for which Crime she had been put off from the Communion for a considerable Time past."

These brief quotations help us to form a picture of a real pastor, zealous in administering the sacraments, and exercising over his flock a strong and wholesome discipline. Ogilvie continued to function in his dual charge until 1759, when he became a chaplain in Johnson's Niagara expedition. We know less about the two priests who followed, the Rev. Thomas Brown and the Rev. Harry Munro, but the record is clear that under them the work was steadily maintained.

But Johnson saw clearly that the work of priests who must divide their time between Albany and Fort Hunter was not enough. In 1767 he had been made a member of S.P.G., and he at once began to use that membership as a lever to move the Society to greater efforts on behalf of his Mohawks. In 1770, aided by an increased appropriation, he was able to secure a full-time priest for the Mohawk mission. He chose for this purpose the Rev. John Stuart, a native of Pennsylvania, and a graduate of the College of Philadelphia. Stuart, originally a Presbyterian, had become a stout High Churchman of the Seabury school. He was just the kind of person to impress his personality upon the Mohawks--six feet two inches in height, robust, active, and athletic. Backed by Johnson and Brant, assisted by Paulus, a son of the famous sachem Hendrick, as catechist, and by a resident schoolmaster who lived at the Upper Castle, where Johnson had in 1772 erected a second church for the Mohawks, he quickly became the undisputed religious leader of the Mohawk nation. In spite of the periodical difficulty of the rum trade, his work was highly successful, and in addition to the Indian congregation, he had gathered a white congregation of about a hundred. In 1774 he thus reported:

"The Indians here continue their regular attendance on Divine service, and their morals are much improved since my residence among them. But for want of a constant interpreter, tis but seldom I have an opportunity of preaching to them--the Liturgy, with administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, Marriage, and the Office of the Burial of the Dead, I can read to them in their own language."

To all this flourishing work the American Revolution brought an end. It must be remembered, by anyone who studies the history of this period, that the Revolution was not just a war of patriotic Americans against oppressive Englishmen. It was a civil war, between men who felt that their first loyalty was to the crown, and those who were convinced that it was rather to their colony. In this colony of New York all the Mohawks, all but one of the priests of the Church of England, and a majority of the Anglican laity were Loyalists. And when they lost, the Church lost with them. The Mohawks, who saw the king as their protector from the encroachments of land-hungry whites, went on the war-path, and were driven from the Valley. During St. Leger's invasion in 1777 an armed mob attacked the rectory at Fort Hunter, looted the church, and forced Stuart to take refuge in Schenectady. He remained there and in Albany under a sort of protective custody until 1781, when he managed to get to Canada. At Brantford, in what is now the Province of Ontario, he rejoined his Mohawk Episcopalians. There, with the help of money collected in England by Brant, he built a church--the mother church of Anglicanism in Ontario. It will be remembered that back in 1712, Queen Anne had sent the mission a set of communion silver. When the Mohawks were first driven from Fort Hunter, they buried the silver, but carefully marked the spot. During one of their raids, they managed to dig it up, and carried it back to Brantford, where it is still in use--mute witness to the loyalty of the Mohawks to king and Church.

In 1783, when the Treaty of Paris brought the Revolution to an end, Anglicanism appeared to be dead in upstate New York. Every church had been closed, every priest had been driven out, great numbers of the laity had emigrated to Canada. But this was a part of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

CHAPTER II

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

As we have seen at the close of the last chapter, the American Revolution was on the surface an unmixed disaster to the Anglican Church in upstate New York. In 1783, that church was dead--but it did not stay dead.

The story of the post-war revival of the Episcopal Church in this area has already been told, in the present writer's History of the Diocese of Albany. It is a thrilling story; how lands previously held by the Indians were now opened to white settlement, how settlers from New England, and especially from Connecticut, flooded into the virgin territory, how they demanded that their church should come with them, how great missionaries like Nash and Chase gave of their time and effort; how Trinity Church, New York, backed the revival with liberal financial support. The upshot was that not only were the three pre-revolutionary parishes of Albany, Schenectady and Johnstown reawakened, but by 1809 twenty new parishes had been started in what had been a howling wilderness. But strangely enough the Fort Hunter-Amsterdam area had no part in this veritable resurrection. One can only conjecture what the reasons were. Since Queen Anne's Chapel had been primarily a church for the Mohawks, and after Wyoming and Cherry Valley the Mohawks were in the Valley only a name of terror, Anglicanism labored under a heavier load of unpopularity in this area than elsewhere. It is also probable that of the hundred white Episcopalians who had attended the chapel under Ogilvie and Stuart, the majority had fled the country, and their lands had been confiscated by their victorious neighbors.

In 1787 a young English priest, the Rev. Thomas Ellison, arrived in Albany, and was promptly called as rector of St. Peter's Church. Ellison is one of the key figures of our story. Not only did he reopen St. Peter's, and start it on the way to becoming the great parish it now is. Mindful of the fact that St. Peter's had always been a missionary center, he traveled far and wide through the rapidly settling territory, holding services from Kinderhook to Unadilla. Attending in 1788 the convention of the newly constituted Diocese of New York, he moved that a committee be appointed to investigate the status of the so-called Fort Hunter glebe--the farm given by the Mohawks to Henry Barclay, and sold by him to the S.P.G. In 1789 the committee reported "that there is a tract of land belonging to the society at Fort Hunter, in the possession of William Harpur, which with their other property in the state the Committee requested the Society to convey to the corporation of Trinity Church, in the City of New York." There are two things to be noted about this report. The first is the calm assumption, on the part of the people of up-state New York, that the Anglican Church was dead, and that its property could be seized by anyone who felt so disposed. And it may at first sight seem strange that property in Montgomery County should be handed over to a New York City church. In fact this was supremely reasonable. At this stage in the history of the Episcopal Church, the vestry of Trinity Church acted as sort of holding corporation for property that no one else could manage, and used its great resources as a missionary trust fund. In 1796 it was further reported that the S.P.G. was willing to comply with this reasonable request, and was about to draw up a deed, conveying the property to Trinity Church, with the proviso that the income from it should be appropriated solely to the support of a missionary or missionaries in the Mohawk Valley. We shall hear more of this later.

In 1791 we hear the first faint stirrings of renewed church life at Fort Hunter. The Rev. Thomas Oliver, who had been called as the first post-revolutionary rector of St. John's, Johnstown, had succeeded in reawakening that parish. He had recovered the church building, seized by the Presbyterians. And he had a sort of commission to see to things at Fort Hunter. But what he actually did there does not appear in the record. He was followed at Johnstown in 1797 by the Rev. John Urquhart, who is listed in the convention journal of that year as "rector of St. Ann's Church, Fort Hunter and St. John's Church, Johnstown." This, it will be noted, is the first appearance in the history of our parish of the name St. Ann's. I do not for a moment suppose that Mr. Urquhart, or whoever was responsible for the naming, had a vaguest notion of placing the parish under the patronage of that highly mythical personage. They were merely trying to perpetuate, in a way inoffensive to Republican ears, the historic appellation of the chapel.

Then follows another silence. The first mention to be found of any actual services in the old and half ruined chapel since 1790 occurs in the convention journal of 1809. In that year the Rev. Jonathan Judd, then rector of Johnstown, reported that he was holding services at Fort Hunter once a month, and that he had discovered there twenty Episcopal families, and five communicants. It will doubtless seem strange to the present day reader that among twenty families only this tiny number of communicants existed, but in fact that ratio is not at all unusual for the period--an age when many people faithfully attended the services of the Episcopal Church all their lives without ever making their communion. Mr. Judd further reported that "the house for worship at Fort Hunter remains in a ruinous condition. They who belong to it are, however, determined on doing something towards repairing it." Their determination must have faded out, since nothing was apparently done. Perhaps it was just as well--the center of gravity of the church in this area was about to shift. In the same report, Judd stated that he had baptized several persons in Amsterdam---the first mention of that name in our ecclesiastical annals.

In 1811 John Henry Hobart became Bishop of New York. Now, for the first time, the Diocese of New York had adequate leadership. The new bishop was a religious genius, in many ways the most notable figure in the history of the American Episcopal Church. Furthermore, he was on fire with missionary zeal. Under his vigorous and driving power, the church in the State of New York grew by leaps and bounds. But still Fort Hunter had no share in this amazing growth. In fact, it seemed to have slipped back. In 1825, the Erie Canal was build, and the old chapel, lying in its path, was demolished. We leave it with a sigh of regret. But perhaps it was just as well; the future of the Church in this area was not in Fort Hunter, but in the neighboring community of Amsterdam. In the next year a step was taken, which was in a sense a farewell to the old location, and a move toward the future. In 1826, in reponse to a petition from the vestry of Johnstown, the vestry of Trinity, New York, sold the glebe, and determined that the interest on the proceeds should be given to the church in Johnstown until the Fort Hunter congregation should be revived.

Ellison Notitia parochialis June 3 (1790) Mr. Ellison preached in the forenoon at Fort Hunter. "The Church is in a wretched condition, the pulpit, reading desk, and two pews only being left, the windows being destroyed, the floor demolished, and the walls cracked. On this visit Mr. Ellison put matters in train for incorporating this congregation."

In 1828 this statement appears in Bishop Hobart's address to the diocesan convention:

"The 5th (August) in the afternoon I officiated at New Amsterdam, where it is convenient for the remains of the old congregation of Fort Hunter to assemble for worship, and where, on the opposite side of the river, in the same town where the former church at Fort Hunter was situated, it is contemplated to erect a church." This was the first time a bishop had visited this area.

Northeast of Amsterdam, lying over the border in Saratoga County, is the sleepy little hamlet of West Charlton. Here, in 1820, was founded the Church of St. Mary. The parish has long been extinct, and the building has disappeared from the face of the earth. But this dead church had a part in the refounding of St. Ann's. In 1829, a year after Bishop Hobart's visitation, the Rev. David Huntington was listed as missionary at West Charlton and Amsterdam. He lived at West Charlton, which was the going concern, and was attempting work at Amsterdam, but with little success. He reported to the Convention of 1829, that "the people of Amsterdam have not yet availed themselves of the missionary appointment and they state to me that they have not been able to obtain a room in which divine service may be celebrated."

In 1830 Huntington was succeeded as missionary at West Charlton and Amsterdam by the Rev. Moses Burt, who had done successful work at Ticonderoga. His report is a bit more encouraging. Significantly, in 1831 the listing is changed. He is no longer missionary at West Charlton and Amsterdam, but at Amsterdam and West Charlton.

Finally, in 1831, things began to happen. The convention journal of that year records that St. Ann's Church, Florida, had been duly incorporated, and was therefore received into union with the convention of the Diocese of New York. On July 31 Bishop Onderdonk visited Amsterdam, and held service in the Baptist Church. But this proved to be a false start. In 1833 there was no missionary report from Burt; in 1834 he had left the station. For two years it was vacant.

CHAPTER III

REBIRTH IN PORT JACKSON

It is a truism, but a truism frequently forgotten by writer of church history, that the Church does not exist in a vacuum. It is a part of society, affected by all the movements, political, social, economic, which affect that society. We have seen in Chapter I, how the church in the area under our consideration was apparently killed by the American Revolution. Its resurrection was a result of the Industrial Revolution.

In 1825 the Erie Canal was built, and one consequence of its building was the destruction of Queen Anne's Chapel. But the opening of the Canal made the Mohawk Valley the great trade route to the west. A torrent of immigrants moved through the waterway, and the communities along its path grew like wildfire. And as they grew, new Episcopal parishes grew with them. In 1800 Amsterdam had an estimated population of one hundred souls. By 1830 it had increased sufficiently to be incorporated as a

village. Across the river and the canal was a distinct community, significantly called Port Jackson -- a canal port.

On September 22, 1835, a meeting was held of the Episcopalians resident in Amsterdam and Port Jackson, at which meeting a parish was legally organized. This incorporation was duly recorded in the office of the county clerk on December 24 of the same year. The spark which lighted this fire appears to have been the Rev. Timothy Minor, who had been appointed missionary at West Charlton and Amsterdam that year. Mr. Minor was a young man, only three years in priest's orders, but he was full of energy, --and quite aware of his own value. At the first parish meeting the following officials were elected:

Wardens:	Shuler Cady and John M. Hobbs
Vestrymen:	Jubel Livermore, Charles Dievendorf, George Warnick, Martin Borst, Chancy Mears, John Schuyler and John Sanford.

Events now moved rapidly. On August 13, 1836, the corner stone of a new building in Port Jackson was laid by the rector. On October 6, 1836, the parish was received into union with the convention of the Diocese of New York, and Martin Borst attended as a lay delegate. On April 5, 1836, Mr. Minor was formally called as rector. On October 13 of the same year, the parish received a grant of five hundred dollars from Trinity, New York, to aid in erecting their building. In addition to this Trinity loaned the parish fifteen dollars, secured by a mortgage. A local subscription of fourteen hundred dollars having been raised, the church was completed, and duly consecrated, on Sunday, July 30, 1837, by Bishop Onderdonk of New York.

"It was built of brick with a frontage on what is now Centre Street, of about forty-five feet and a depth of perhaps seventy feet, the gable end facing the street. The only attempt at architectural ornamentation was the portico, with pediment upheld by two large Ionic columns in antis and surmounted by an abbreviated square tower or belfry, but no bell. The entablature was of wood heavily moulded, and together with the portico, was painted white, while the walls were of unpainted brick. The entrance into the Church was by four doors from the portico, two into the body of the Church, and two to the gallery which extended across the rear or north end of the Church. The interior with its cold white walls and tall windows, destitute of blinds and with small panes of glass, might well have been taken for that of a primitive Church of colonial days, were it not for the bright colors of the pulpit and reading desk at the south end of the Church.

The reading desk was slightly raised from the platform, around which ran the altar rail. The pulpit was directly back of the reading desk and approached from the Vestry rooms by five or six steps on each side. Both desk and pulpit were draped and cushioned with the bright red moreen so common in those days in most Churches,

and the pews were of the same uncomfortable style that prevailed in Church edifices sixty years ago." *

No sooner had the building been erected, than the parish ran into difficulties, difficulties which it shared with many parishes of its day. For centuries the Church of England has been supported wholly by endowments or taxes, collected by the state, and paid over to the church. It is hard for us to understand, but when Episcopalians moved into this country they had no conception that the man who went to church on Sunday was under obligation to contribute anything to its support. In colonial days, the problem of church support was settled in one of two ways. In some colonies--- Virginia and Maryland--the church was established, that is, tax supported. In the northern colonies, the priest was paid either by grants from the S.P.G. or by the benefactions of wealthy men like Johnson and Duane. Therefore, in a great number of parishes, this happened. The church was built by local subscription, usually with a great burst of enthusiasm. And then the parish settled back with a feeling that all had been accomplished. But to their surprise, in place after place, they discovered that this was not so. A building once erected and paid for lasts for a long time. But the rector's stipend, and the sexton's wages, and the fuel bill are like the brook. They go on forever. And this was a problem which the laity of the period had no tradition of dealing with. Furthermore, it must be noted that the building of St. Ann's, Port Jackson coincided fatally with the panic of 1837--the most severe the United States had to face during the Nineteenth Century. In the minutes of 1838 there is evidence that the parish was in the midst of a financial crisis. The treasurer was called upon for a report and refused to give it.

This was followed by two significant entries.

"The Rev. Timothy Minor resigned his charge at Port Jackson on the nineteenth day of May, 1838. At the time he commenced his labours here, there was not one person in the vicinity, who either understood, or was interested in the services of the Church; or who could be induced directly to make another effort to obtain the Fort Hunter property. Therefore by dint of his own means, he succeeded in settling permanently, claims which had been contested for more than forty years, and has secured to the Corporation of St. Ann's Church, about four thousand dollars; by which a commodious church has been built, and a respectable congregation established."

This is apparently in Mr. Minor's own handwriting, and partly conflicts with his own report to the diocesan convention of the preceding year. It is followed by another entry, in another hand.

*Here it is necessary that I pay my respect to W. Max Reid, who published in the year 1897 a small volume engagingly entitled "Ye History of St. Ann's Church in ye City of Amsterdam." Mr. Reid was for fifty odd years a faithful member of St. Ann's. He was deeply interested in local history, and made a brave attempt at writing it. He has preserved for our use many facts that would otherwise be totally lost. The preceding description of the Port Jackson Church is copied verbatim from his history, and is in all probability accurate, since he attended this church for years. The parish and this present writer owe him a debt of gratitude.

"The above statement is a gross exaggeration. . . . The sum stated to be four thousand dollars as permanently settled on the Corporation is in fact no more than twenty two hundred."

Plainly, a very serious quarrel had arisen between rector and vestry-- a quarrel which did not terminate with his leaving. In 1839 we find Mr. Minor suing the vestry and the vestry taking the unusual step of resolving "that a letter of complaint be addressed to the Rt. Rev. Benjamin T. Onderdonk, D.D., Bishop of the diocese of New York in relation to the character and proceedings of the late rector."

In spite of this unedifying situation, much had been accomplished during Mr. Minor's short rectorate. The new building had been erected. The matter of the glebe lands had been settled, the farm having been sold, and the proceeds divided between Johnstown and Amsterdam. This settlement marks the beginning of Amsterdam's endowment fund. And a thriving Sunday School had been started.

On May 20, 1838, the Rev. John Knill was called as rector "for the space of one year." Our present canon law does not allow of such a call, but it was not unusual in those days. In 1840, Mr. Knill resigned. In 1841, the Rev. Hobart Williams was conducting services, but the minutes give no indication that he was formally called as rector.

On April 13, 1841, the Rev. Orsamus H. Smith, missionary at Rennselaerville, was called as rector, again for one year only, at a salary of \$325. To this, however, must be added a grant from the Missionary Committee of the diocese. With his coming, the new parish gained a measure of stability. Apparently the financial picture was improving, since in this same year the vestry embarked upon the purchase of an organ.

As we have remarked, the financial troubles which St. Ann's was facing at this juncture were common to many, perhaps most Episcopal parishes of this period. The first solution which was found to this problem of providing regular and adequate support for the steady life of the parish was the system of pew rents. In a fairly large city, with a fairly large number of well-to-do Episcopalians available, the system worked--at a price. Just about this time, the treasurer of St. Thomas's Church, New York, was proudly reporting to the vestry that every pew in the church was rented, at an average annual rental of six hundred dollars. This was a little more than the rector of St. Ann's was receiving from parish and diocese. And the pew rent system made the church which adopted it successfully a class church, in which the working man had no place. St. Ann's tried it. In 1838 it was resolved by the vestry to appraise the pews in the church, and to sell them at public auction. But Amsterdam at this time had not enough wealthy Episcopalians to make the system a success, and while a few were sold, the proceeds did not provide enough funds to carry on the work of the parish. In 1842 it was resolved that a collection be taken up on the last Sunday in each month for the purpose of defraying ordinary contingent expenses. The following resolution of April 26, 1842, is clear evidence of the difficulty the parish was having to make ends meet.

"On motion resolved that the clerk give a corporation note to the Rev. O. H. Smith for the Ballance of salary for the year ending the first of May, which is \$226."

There are no minutes for 1843, and only the annual meetings are recorded for 1844-5-6. Mr. Smith continued in his rectorship from year to year and seems to have served acceptably. On May 1, 1847, he offered his resignation. It was received with feelings of regret, the vestry stating that he "had discharged his pastoral duties with commendable faithfulness and ability, and to our entire satisfaction." The resignation was due to one fact; Mr. Smith could no longer go on at the salary Amsterdam paid; especially when it was not always paid.

For a year the parish was vacant. At an undated meeting held sometime in 1848, the vestry was able to find some one to fill the vacancy. The Rev. Abraham Newkirk Littlejohn, then a deacon, was called as rector -- at a salary of five hundred dollars for the first year. Evidently they had discovered that if they were to have satisfactory ministrations, they must begin to pay for them. They were most fortunate in their choice. Mr. Littlejohn was then at the beginning of a notable career. He eventually became the first Bishop of Long Island.

On December 11, 1848, at a meeting of the vestry presided over by Mr. Littlejohn, an important decision was made. It was concluded that the location of the church in Port Jackson was a mistake, that the strength of the parish lay north of the river, and that if the parish was to become what they hoped, it must move. And now events moved very swiftly. In January of 1849, an agreement was consummated to sell the building to the Roman Catholic Church for \$2400. And thus St. Ann's, Port Jackson, became the first St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church. Eventually, the Roman Church also moved north of the river, the building becoming a factory, and was finally torn down.

CHAPTER IV

THE THIRD CHURCH

The Erie Canal had given the first impulse to the growth of Amsterdam, and the church in Port Jackson is the monument of that growth. But in the Forties, the Industrial Revolution really arrived in our community. Tumbling down from the hills which border the Mohawk Valley is Chuctanunda Creek. Chuctanunda Creek meant water power, and water power, plus available transportation, meant factories. Along its banks there began to grow up, during this decade, a flourishing crop of knitting mills. And still more important for the future, in 1842 the first carpet factory was started. Now these factories, and especially the carpet mill, needed skilled help, which was obtainable only in the north of England. And so there flooded into Amsterdam hundreds of workmen from Yorkshire and Lancashire.

They were a sturdy, hardworking, self-respecting folk, devoted sons and daughters of the Church of England. They attended church with exemplary regularity, they loved to sing in the choir. But they brought with them two traditions. They were Low Churchmen, deeply suspicious of "Popery". And they had never been trained to support the church financially. With their mixture of virtues and defects, they made St. Ann's a different thing than it had been.

It is one of the unfortunate facts about parish history that while it is usually possible to find out a considerable amount concerning the priests who have served a parish, the laymen are frequently lost in obscurity. Here are the names of the men who undertook to build the third church.

Wardens: Abraham Pulling
Henry Eldred

Vestrymen: George Warnick
Dr. Charles Devendorf
Jubel Simmons
William H. Hill
James Riggs
H. A. Hindle
Cyrus B. Chase
Francis Newkirk

Three of these stand out. Abraham Pulling was warden from 1841 to 1864. He and George Warnick were the financial backstays of the difficult period, and we find repeated mention of their coming forward to make up a deficit at the end of the year. Dr. Charles Devendorf became a vestryman in 1835, and served as vestryman and warden until 1872.

Mr. Littlejohn resigned on April 15, 1849, but the impulse he had given the parish carried on. During the rectorate of his successor, the Rev. Thomas L. Franklin, which lasted until the end of 1853, the church in Amsterdam was completed.

It was quite a different structure from its predecessors. The chapel at Fort Hunter, had been a simple blockhouse sort of building, with no architectural pretensions whatsoever. The church in Port Jackson was dignified by a pair of columns, but beyond that it was merely a commodious building for holding services. But meanwhile a change had come over the whole spirit of church building. About 1825 we first find mention in our ecclesiastical annals of "Gothic" churches being erected. At that early date, this must be taken with a grain of salt. The Gothic churches built in the twenties and thirties were of the type of Emmanuel Church, Little Falls --- a sturdy, barnlike building, gothic only in the respect that its windows terminated in points. But in the 1840's the Gothic Revival in America --- really took hold. The consecration, in 1846, of Trinity Church, New York, the work of Richard Upjohn, set an example which was followed all over the land. And so, the third church of St. Ann's was to be Gothic in the Puginesque sense of the term.

The minutes of the period are singularly disappointing. There is no record of an architect being engaged, no record of a contract for building. According to Mr. Reid, the cost of the church as \$5,500. On June 20, 1851, it was duly consecrated by the Rt. Rev. William H. DeLancey, Bishop of Western New York, the Diocese of New York then being vacant because of the suspension of Bishop Onderdonk. The building --- which is substantially all of the present building east of the nave, is thus described by Mr. Reid.

"The building of 1851 was of gothic style, the nave only being constructed. A wide aisle in the centre led up to the narrow chancel in the north. The chancel rail enclosed the altar table with a modest reredos behind it, and the reading desk to the west

side of it. Outside of the rail and a little in advance from it on the east side stood a small elevated pulpit. In the rear and over the vestibule the choir was located."

The following statement, which appeared in a local paper gives us some insight into how the building was erected:

"The vestry had no trouble in finding excellent stone cutters. Men were still working who had helped to build the locks of the Erie Canal. Finding a man to interpret the architect's plans was not easy. Finally, Stephen Sanford, who had taken a course at West Point that enabled him to understand the lines and figures of the drawings, volunteered his assistance. The work then went forward.

*The same article attributes the plans to Richard Upjohn. This is impossible. There is an excellent biography of Upjohn, which lists all his works. Amsterdam is not among them.

The building of the new church gave a real impetus to the life of the parish. In 1852, sixteen persons were confirmed -- a record number up to this time. An organ had been installed, and an organist appointed, at an annual salary of forty dollars. In October, 1853, the Rev. Mr. Franklin offered his resignation. The vestry attempted to retain him, but were unsuccessful. On January 27, 1854, the Rev. William H. Trapnell was called, at a salary of five hundred dollars a year, to be paid semi-annually, plus whatever was granted to him by the diocese as a missionary stipend. His first report to the diocesan convention gives us some notion of the state of the parish. There were forty families, with a total membership of two hundred persons. The number of communicants had increased to forty-one. Sixty children attended the Sunday School, which was taught by sixteen teachers. The Holy Communion was celebrated on the first Sunday of every month, and on the principal holy days. There were two services every Sunday, one every Wednesday, and during Lent an additional service on Friday. This is a comparatively flourishing state of affairs. But the total contributions for the previous year had been only \$367.50. Mr. Trapnell is reported by Dr. Carroll to have been a "severe Calvinist, and the sternness of his preaching was long a memory with the people of the Parish." During his short rectorate the tower was begun and a bell was purchased. Apparently his Calvinism proved too stiff for the people of St. Ann's, and on April 24, 1857, the vestry resolved that his services be discontinued. A vacancy of over a year followed.

On August 26, 1858, the Rev. James Robinson was called as rector at a salary of six hundred dollars. With his rectorate there begins a period of steady and relatively untroubled growth. He held office until the end of 1863, being absent for six months in 1862, when he was granted leave of absence to serve as an army chaplain in the Civil War. There is no record of his resignation, nor of the calling of the Rev. Porter Thomas, who took office January 1, 1864, and continued until 1869. In 1867, the vestry, in common with all the vestries of the Diocese, were asked to express an opinion on the proposed division of the Diocese of New York. They were in favor of the proposition.

The division was duly accomplished, and the first convention of the new Diocese of Albany met on December 2, 1868. St. Ann's was represented by its rector, and by three lay delegates, Messrs. Charles Devendorf, James Fox and W. Maxwell Reid. The Diocese of New York had long been unwieldy in size. The division meant that from henceforth our parish would be a part of a much more closely knit organization, with a bishop located only thirty miles away. On May 28, 1869, the Rt. Rev. William Groswell Doane, first Bishop of

Albany, made his first visitation to St. Ann's, where he confirmed thirteen persons. He was able to state that "things here are prospering and promising, with a better present and a brighter future than ever before, though I am sorry to record the resignation of the excellent rector which goes into operation on the first of next month. Mr. Thomas will carry with him the warm respect and interest of his whole Parish, and all of the Diocese that know him." By this time the total membership of the parish had grown to two hundred and fifty. There were now sixty-seven communicants, and eighty children under instruction. The salary had been increased to six hundred and fifty dollars.

The next three rectorates were short; the Rev. Thomas G. Clemson serving from Nov., 1869 to Dec., 1870, the Rev. Howard T. Widdemer from April, 1871 to January, 1875, and the Rev. J. C. Hewlett from 1875 to 1876. But in spite of these short terms, usually the sign of a weak and unstable parish, St. Ann's was growing by leaps and bounds. The number of baptized members had jumped from two hundred and fifty in 1869 to four hundred in 1874; the communicant strength from sixty seven to one hundred and twelve; the children in the Sunday school from eighty to one hundred thirty. And with this growth came increasing financial security. From the foundation of Queen Anne's Chapel until the time we are considering, the Church in Fort Hunter and Amsterdam had been maintained by a missionary subsidy. With the erection of the Diocese of Albany, that subsidy came to an end, and the parish stood on its own feet. Not only that, it was becoming itself a missionary center. In 1874 the Rev. Howard Widdemer, then rector, organized missions at Canajoharie and Fort Plain. The rector's stipend was increased to nine hundred dollars in 1870, then to twelve hundred in 1874.

In 1871, Mr. Widdemer being rector, two significant actions were taken. A Committee was appointed to investigate the matter of buying or building a rectory. Once again a gap in the minutes leaves us without information, but by 1873 a rectory was in being. On December 29, 1871, the following motion was passed:

"On motion of the clerk the seats and sittings of St. Ann's Church be, and are hereby declared free for the ensuing year."

This was a daring innovation for those days. And from that time on, it was intended that the seats at St. Ann's Were always to be free. It was no longer a church which catered to the carriage trade. And the interesting thing about all this is, that only the year before this resolution was passed, the vestry of St. Ann's had been hiring a collector, to collect pew rents at five per cent for himself. It looks like an economic and social revolution, and the credit, I feel, must go to the Rev. Mr. Widdemer.

In spite of the rapidly increasing membership of the parish, there were still financial problems. When the Rev. J. C. Hewlett resigned in May, 1876, the vestry was compelled to give him a note for one hundred and twenty dollars to pay up the arrears in his salary.

On June 12, 1876, the Rev. William N. Irish was called as rector at a salary of one thousand dollars. We have some notion of his personality from the anniversary sermon of the Rev. Dr. Carroll.

"Mr. Irish was a scholar and linguist of no mean ability, and while here received a degree of doctor of divinity from Hobart College. He was a genial man, with a very

quick and keen sense of humor. His ideal of duty was of the highest. Once there was an epidemic of small pox in town, and many a time he could be seen at dead of night wending his way through the darkness to the cemetery with a little group of mourners to say the last words of the Church over some unfortunate victim."

He was also a man who was not afraid to speak out. On July 1, 1877, he preached a sermon, later printed, which is in part a valuable summary of the history of the parish up to his time. But toward the end of his discourse, he spoke his mind very plainly on the way in which the members of the congregation supported their church.

"It is a free church, and none will ever be excluded or denied any ministration who are unable to give; but the things you prize most are free, and you are compelled to pay tithes and taxes for them in exact proportion to their value. You who call upon me to baptize your children, visit your sick, bury your dead, and yet refuse to step forward and bear your just proportion of the current expenses of the parish when you are perfectly able to give a little, are guilty of a gigantic swindle against God."

This is plain speaking. The remarkable thing is that Mr. Irish got away with it. He remained rector for eight years.

On May 8, 1884, his resignation having been accepted, the Rev. Irish ceased to be rector of the parish. This had been the longest rectorate in the history of the parish. Considerable difficulty was met in the choice of his successor; several men were called and declined. Finally on July 30, 1884, the Rev. David Sprague was called at a salary of one thousand dollars. He was then in deacon's orders only. For a number of years the mortgage on the rectory had been a drag on the finances of the parish. At Easter, 1885, a sum of sixteen hundred dollars was raised by a special effort, which radically changed this situation. Mr. Sprague was duly ordained priest on Feb. 15, 1885, in the building which was then serving as the cathedral. It is apparent that the vestry was becoming more aware than it had been in the past that the Episcopal Church has a canon law. Under that canon law, a deacon cannot be rector of a parish. Now that Mr. Sprague had been ordained priest, on June 30, 1885, this resolution was passed.

"It was moved by B. Finlayson and seconded by J. M. Thomas that this vestry do extend to the Rev. David Sprague a call to the Rectorship of this parish at the yearly salary of \$1000. This motion was not only carried unanimously, but also met with the fervent, personal approval of every member of the vestry present."

The rectorate thus auspiciously begun continued in like manner. On April 14, 1886 the vestry voted to increase the rector's stipend to \$1250. This was good. Even better was the next motion.

"Resolved, that it is the sentiment of the vestry that the church be enlarged."

From this point on, things moved with great rapidity. Two weeks later, the vestry set up two committees, a building committee and a financial committee. Their

names should be recorded. The building committee consisted of Messrs. Reid, Sugden, and Finlayson; the financial committee of Messrs. Thomas, Warnick, and Ryland. The young and vigorous rector was made an ex officio member of both committees. In less than a month, the financial committee was able to report that it had secured pledges of \$4200. Encouraged by this, the vestry proceeded to act with commendable rapidity. On July 19 contracts totally about twenty thousand dollars were let, and thus work began at once.

It is to be noted that from the beginning of the rectorate of Mr. Irish the minutes of the vestry, which had often been so sparse, with long gaps of no entries at all, become full and clear. We therefore have fuller information about the erection of this, which might be called the fourth church, than of any of the others. The architect of the new building was a Mr. Brown of Troy. The contracts which are entered in the records of July 6, 1877, totaled about twenty thousand dollars. So rapidly was the work pushed forward, that we find the following statement in Bishop Doane's report to the convention of 1888.

"Sunday, November the 11th, I dedicated the new Building of St. Ann's, Amsterdam, the Rector reading the request to dedicate the building, and the Archdeacon the sentence of dedication. The Building is not only very wisely managed in its relation to the part of the old Church which is left, but it is very beautiful in all its structure and appointments, and it gives room and chance for the Church to keep pace with the rapid growth of the city. Here, as in so many other places, it is true, that while many people have helped in the work, the result is due in large degree to the Rector, the Senior Warden, and the women."

At the time of completion of the church, the total membership was eight hundred: the number of communicants two hundred forty-three. It is to be noted that the parish had reverted to the pew rent system. Of the seats in the church, four hundred and fifty were rented, one hundred and fifty were free. The debt on the building was thirteen thousand dollars.

On August 30, 1893, the Rev. David Sprague presented his resignation. He bettered Mr. Irish's term of service, the longest up to that time in the history of the parish, by one year. His resignation was accepted by the vestry with sincere expressions of regret.

CHAPTER V

THE GOLDEN AGE

In the life of nearly every parish there is a period somewhere in its past, which appears to succeeding generations as a sort of Golden Age. St. Ann's was now about to enter upon such a period. The population of the community had been growing by leaps and bounds. In 1870 a village of five thousand people, by 1900 it was a city of twenty thousand. The two businesses on which the economy of the city was built, the manufacture of knit goods and of carpets, were at their height. The parish had become a stable organization, with a fine building, filled Sunday after Sunday by the rapidly growing congregation.

It now became the business of the vestry to find an acceptable priest to carry on the work the Rev. Dr. Sprague had brought so far. They chose well.

Edward Tourtellot Carroll was born in Johnstown in 1867. He was educated in the Johnstown public schools and at Trinity Military School. In 1889 he graduated from Union College in Schenectady, where his scholarship won him election to Phi Beta Kappa. He then entered the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge, Mass., at that time probably the best seminary of the American Episcopal Church in its academic standing. Graduation in 1893, he became curate at Christ Church, Fitchburg, Mass.

On April 1, 1894, the vestry called Mr. Carroll as rector of St. Ann's, at a salary of \$1250 a year. In the following month he began a rectorate which was to last forty-one years. De. Sprague had built a church. It was one of the new rector's first jobs to finish paying for it. When he took office there was still outstanding a mortgage of fifteen thousand dollars.*

On January 12, 1896, Mr. J. H. Hanson, who had just become treasurer, presented a report for the period from April 22, 1895, to January 1, 1896, which is of some interest.

	<u>Receipts</u>	
Pew Rents		1851.86
Communion alms		45.11
Collections		221.05
Special Offerings		93.77
From societies for debt and interest		804.56
Trinity Church, New York		157.70
Window account		60.00
Legacy		100.00

Two things are to be noted about this report. The parish had gone back to the renting of pews, and the pew rents made up the greater part of its income. The money received from Trinity Church, New York, was the interest on the fund set up when the pre-Revolutionary property at Fort Hunter had been sold. This constituted, of course the actual link between Queen Anne's Chapel and St. Ann's Church. So well did the financial picture appear, that the vestry promptly voted to increase the rector's stipend to \$1400 a year.

The last half of the Nineteenth Century was an era during which the worship of the American Episcopal Church was undergoing rapid change. We have suggested, in an earlier chapter, how bleak and bare that worship had been in the Eighteenth Century--so bleak and bare that the average Episcopalian of today, if he could be suddenly transported on a Sunday morning into a service at Queen Anne's Chapel, would hardly

* In 1895 Mr. Le Grand Strang, vestryman and treasurer, whose service had extended over twenty-one years, retired, and died almost immediately. When his books were examined, it was found that his estate owed the church \$854, which had to be met by a mortgage on property left by him. Now there is no suggestion of dishonesty about this, but it is characteristic of the way in which church finances were handled in that day. The present reredos is a memorial to Mr. Strang.

recognize that he was in his own church. Some of the changes of the intervening period were the offshoot of the Oxford Movement, and involved profound doctrinal implication. Others were "enrichment", pure and simple. The very building in which this congregation now worships, with its Gothic arches and stained glass windows, so different from the simple stone rectangle of Fort Hunter, or the sham Grecian temple of Port Jackson, is a mute evidence that St. Ann's was following the trend of the times. At the very end of the century a new development began. In 1896 the vestry appropriated two hundred dollars to pay a quartette choir. But only a year later they appointed a committee to buy vestments for a choir of boys and men. These two little lines in the vestry minutes are the marks of a silent revolution; they indicate how St. Ann's was lining up with the church at large. Thirty years before this time a boy choir, a vested choir, would have been a protentious thing; in the eighteen-nineties they sprang up like mushrooms. And this change in outward appearance very likely indicates a change in the type of music being sung. In all probability St. Ann's was moving from Dudley Buck to Sir John Stainer. It is to be presumed that the boy choir, if indeed it was started at this time, did not last. But from this time on, music was to be a large factor in the life of the parish.*

In 1903 the parish began to take steps to clear off the building debt which the rector had inherited. This campaign continued until the summer of 1906, when the last dollar was raised and the church building was free and unencumbered. On October 1, 1906, it was duly consecrated with imposing ceremonies by the Rt. Rev. William Croswell Doane, Bishop of Albany.

No sooner was the debt paid off, than the parish began to plan and make further improvements in the fabric. In 1908 the chancel was paved with mosaic in memory of Mrs. Emily Devendorf, for many years organist of the church. In 1912 the present tower was erected, and a bell, the gift of Mr. James T. Sugden, was hung.

A more important change was soon to come. For many years the parish had been handicapped in its work by the lack of an adequate parish hall. For years, such a building had been talked about, but nothing had been done about it. In 1921 the Rector was talking with the Hon. William B. Charles, one of the prominent laymen of the parish. In the course of their conversation, the term "parish house" cropped up, and then and there they determined to begin action. The upshot was that Mr. Charles offered to contribute a substantial sum toward the needed structure. The Rector, who had a positive genius for raising money without ballyhoo, went into high gear, several large gifts were made, and by the spring of 1923 the present parish hall was completed. By the following year it was entirely paid for, at a cost of \$52,000, and duly dedicated.

* In spite of these enrichments, the parish, with its large number of members from the Church of Ireland, was still suspicious of "Ritualism". It is related that one Sunday Dr. Sprague in going to the altar, caught his foot in the hem of his cassock and bent over to release it. This was taken for a genuflexion, and an indignation meeting was held over it. And in 1912, when Mr. Thomas Mansfield gave the parish a processional cross, there was a mild storm over this Romish innovation.

We have mentioned the evidence that in 1897 the vestry was contemplating a boy choir. I can find no indication that such a choir ever came into being at that time. If it did, it must have died in infancy. The real beginning of the boy choir of St. Ann's came in 1911. In that year Mr. Russell Carter arrived in Amsterdam to become director of music in the public schools of the city. Now the Rector had long desired such a choir, and in Mr. Carter he found the appropriate instrument to make the choir a reality. To abolish an existing mixed choir in a parish as conservative as St. Ann's without a major parish row is a diplomatic achievement of the first magnitude. The Rector accomplished it; Mr. Carter went to work, and soon had built up an organization which became the pride of the parish. He was undoubtedly helped by the fact that he had available a body of men who had sung in English choirs, and who therefore knew their business. The musical tradition thus started has continued without a break until the present time. In 1919 Mr. Carter left Amsterdam to become supervisor of music in the Education Department of the State of New York. But he left Amsterdam a strong and devout churchman, as he continued until his recent death.

He was followed as organist and choirmaster by Mr. Kenneth Rice, who died after only two years of service. In 1921 Mr. A. O. Coggeshall succeeded, and did a fine work for seven years, being notable developer of boy sopranos. He in turn was followed by Mr. Reginald Harris, a boy of the parish who had started as a choir boy, and when the vacancy occurred had just completed his musical training at the College of Fine Arts at Syracuse University. Mr. Harris, whose influence upon the musical standards of St. Ann's continues to this day, was succeeded by Mr. Theodore S. Bulger of New York City in September 1947. Mr. Bulger, a capable and sensitive musician, was followed in 1951 by Mr. Otto Miller, like Dr. Carter director of music in the local school system. In an era when many boy choirs have disappeared from the American scene, Mr. Miller has been able to maintain his--and the parish tradition--until the present writing.

The same year that marked the effective beginning of the male choir of St. Ann's saw also the passing of one of its notable laymen, W. Max Reid had been a vestryman since 1867, and a warden since 1876. He was one of that great army of devoted laity who are the salt of the earth, and the stabilizers of parish life. Always an optimist about the future of the parish, he had worshipped in the church in Port Jackson, had been active in the removal to Amsterdam proper and the building of the old church on Division Street, and had advocated vigorously the enlargement of that church which constituted the present building.

Deeply conscious of the history of the parish, and proud of that history, he had done much to preserve it by writing and publishing the parish history which is the forerunner of the present one.

Another important step in furthering the progress of good music in the worship of the parish took place in 1925. During the preceding year Dr. Carroll's wife, a woman who had always been active in parish work, and who was deeply loved by the members of the parish, died. It was proposed that a new organ be installed as a memorial to her, since she had been a music lover. Without any great drive taking place, money for this project flowed in, eventually amounting to twenty thousand dollars. The new organ, built by Cassavant of Quebec, one of the best builders in the American continent, brought joy to organist and congregation.

Some time back, it was noted that an attempt had been made to abolish the system of pew rents. This attempt was undoubtedly premature, and pew rents continued to be the chief source of parish income. In 1926, the decisive and final step was taken. Here again, we see St. Ann's functioning, not as a mere local unit, but as a part of that much larger body, the American Episcopal Church. Throughout the Nineteenth Century, it had been true of most Episcopal parishes that pew rents constituted the largest and most dependable source of income. But in the beginning of the Twentieth Century, this became less and less palatable. This, it must be remembered, was the reform era, the age of Theodore Roosevelt, when the social conscience of America, and of the American churches, was quickening into life. And to this conscience the idea that one could buy reserved seats in the house of God became increasingly repugnant. Then in 1919, General Convention instituted the first Every Member Canvass--the machinery that was to make pew rents unnecessary. St. Ann's fell in line with this, and in this parish pew rents became a thing of the past.

Nor was this the only improvement these years saw in the finances of the parish. During the first decade of the new century, several small legacies had been given the parish. By 1913, they totaled four thousand dollars. This was duly invested in bonds as the beginning of a parish endowment. Four years later the vestry resolved that the income from these bonds should not be thrown into the current expense fund, but segregated and reinvested to build up the endowment.

And then, the rosy financial picture suddenly changed. In 1929 came the Great Depression. The impact of the business situation was not felt for a year or so. But by November, 1932, the vestry was compelled to take a drastic step. Income was falling rapidly behind expenditures. The Rector therefore made them an offer. He would accept, in place of his cash salary of three thousand dollars a year, one hundred dollars a month, with notes to make up the remainder. Regretfully, the vestry had to accept this generous offer.

On February 19, 1934, a special meeting of the vestry was called, at which Dr. Carroll tendered his resignation. We quote from the minutes of the meeting:

"W. Fenton Myers spoke with feeling regarding the Doctor's resignation and reviewed at length many of the wonderful improvements and things done during his stewardship and moved that under the existing circumstances his resignation of Jan. 1st, 1935, be accepted with the sincere regrets of the vestry and the Parish as a whole."

He had been rector forty-one years. During his rectorate, the parish had grown from a communicant strength of 328 in 1895 to 798 in 1935.

The vestry proceeded to borrow five thousand dollars to pay up the whole of his back salary, and also elected him rector emeritus--an honor he was to enjoy for four years. He died in 1940.

What manner of man was Dr. Carroll, and what was the secret of his great and obvious success? The question is easier to ask than to answer. One can discover no outstanding brilliance, no flamboyant qualities about him, but rather a

great solidity. In churchmanship he belonged to the old and long since departed group of orthodox Evangelicals, men whom the Oxford movement had passed by, men with no taste for the novelties of ceremonial that came in during the Nineteenth Century, but men who were deeply attached to the Book of Common Prayer, men who were sure that the Church was the Church, and not another Protestant sect. He was a devoted and careful pastor, who in his quiet way won the love of his people. In his management of parish affairs he appears to have been a sort of silent autocrat, who without beating on his chest managed to run the parish single handed. We have mentioned his aptitude for money raising. At this period, there were a fair number of moneyed people in the parish, and Dr. Carroll, without in any way being subservient, was able to draw on their ample resources. The result was, that when a large sum was needed, he was able to say "I have it." The weakness of this system was that the vestry became a sort of rubber stamp, meeting only three or four times a year, noting that all was going on satisfactorily, and adjourning with a sign of relief that they were not called upon to do more.

In time, Dr. Carroll's sterling qualities brought him recognition outside the confines of Amsterdam. He was granted the degree of Doctor of Divinity by his alma mater, Union College. He became a member of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Albany, and was several times elected deputy to General Convention from the diocese. He had become one of the half dozen priests who assisted the bishop in the running of the diocese.

CHAPTER VII

LOSS AND GAIN

On January 3, 1935, the vestry extended a call to the Rev. William Dunlop Orr to become rector of St. Ann's. The salary was set at twenty-five hundred dollars. The vestry at this time consisted of Messrs. E. J. Townsend, and W. Fenton Myers, wardens; and Messrs. E. G. Davey, Amos Hill, Frank Joslin, John Smart, William S. Charles, H. J. Scruton, George Ouderkerk, and John B. Bostwick, vestrymen.

The new rector was only thirty years of age when he came to St. Ann's. Trained like his predecessor at the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge, Mass., he had been assistant first at St. Paul's Church, Albany, and at St. Andrew's, Ann Arbor, Mich. He was a young man of charming personality, an exceptional preacher, and a man with a conception of the ministry which was different from the conventional.

It was no easy task the new rector was undertaking. To follow a priest who has been forty years in a parish, and who has been an outstanding success, is no simple matter. Furthermore, in the mid thirties the parish had still not recovered from the financial effects of the depression. And a greater difficulty was at hand. The depression was a temporary matter, to be lived through. But the whole Amsterdam community was facing a much greater problem. Its economy was built on two industries, the making of knit goods and carpets. Just at this time, throughout the whole northeastern part of the United States, the knit goods industry was steadily moving out, moving south, nearer to coal, cotton, and cheap labor. Eventually the knit goods industry disappeared from Amsterdam. The carpet business stayed longer and did not entirely vanish, but one of the great factories eventually moved south likewise.

But in spite of these difficulties, which came on only gradually, the life of the parish flourished. The new rector's youth and vigor made themselves felt, the deficit he had inherited was quickly cleared off the books, the communicant strength rose to over a thousand souls, and his salary was raised to three thousand dollars.

In the long life of a parish, every successful rector has his own particular contribution to make. The rectorate of Mr. Orr was marked by two phases of activity. Unlike a great many priests of the Episcopal Church, he had a strong sense of the life of the community as a whole, and a willingness to take part in that life. And so we find him becoming an important figure on various boards. He was a member of the Amsterdam Housing Authority, of the recreation commission. He was a president of the Community Concerts Association. A great honor came to him when he became president of the Board of Education -- an unusual function for a clergyman in these days of agitation for the entire separation of church and state. His term as president over, he remained a member of the Board of Education until his death.

For years, the parish had been without a rectory. In 1946, a house was bought on Arnold Avenue, which was used until 1954, when it was sold and the house adjoining the church on Division Street was purchased.

On January 8, 1951, the vestry voted to adopt the "rotating vestry" system. This was a measure which meant that when a vestryman's term expired, he was ineligible for re-election until a year had elapsed. The object of this was to bring a constant flow of new blood, and engage a larger number of men in the administration of the parish.

One of the notable features of the decade which began in 1950 was the steady increase in the endowment fund of the parish. Unlike most parishes of a like age, the parish had very little in the way of endowment when Mr. Orr became rector. The reason for this is not hard to find. During the early days in Port Jackson and on Division Street, the great problem had been to meet current expenses, and we have seen how hard that was. Then came the era of expansion, when everything that could be raised had to go into buildings. The result was that in 1941 the endowment amounted to only nine thousand dollars. In 1955, it had increased to fifty thousand and by 1959, it was just under a hundred thousand. This, with the increased collections brought about by the Every Member Canvass, gave the parish a reasonable financial security.

In 1960, the rector had been in office twenty-five years. In spite of the economic difficulties of the community, the parish had shown its stability under his leadership. Therefore, on the night of January 30, a Testimonial Dinner was held in his honor. The Bishop of the diocese, the pastor of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, the Rabbi of the Jewish congregation, the minister of the Second Presbyterian Church, the president of the Board of Education--all joined in bearing tribute to Mr. Orr as priest, pastor, and community leader.

At the end of February, 1961, the rector was suddenly taken ill. He was rushed to the hospital, but within two days the parish was shocked and grieved to hear that he was dead. He was buried from the church he served so well, and followed to the grave by a sorrowing congregation.

The death of Mr. Orr makes a fitting end to our brief account of the long life of St. Ann's. We have seen it start as a pioneer mission in the primeval forest. We have followed its slow rebirth after the American Revolution. We have watched its growing pains through the thirties and fourties. We have seen the rude stone chapel at Fort Hunter replaced by the present noble parish church. And we have traced it through the two long rectorates which have made it what it is today, one of the great parishes of a great diocese.



HECKMAN
BINDERY, INC.
Bound-To-Please®

OCT 00

N. MANCHESTER, INDIANA 46962

